

Message Text

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46

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SAM-01 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02 PRS-01

SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 SY-05 SCCT-01 USSS-00 DHA-02

ORM-01 AID-05 /104 W

----- 094891

R 231705Z SEP 75

FM AMEMBASSY MADRID

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3076

INFO AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

UNCLAS MADRID 6619

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, SP

SUBJ: RECENT SEIZURE OF EGYPTIAN EMBASSY

REF : MADRID 6503

1. SEPT 21 ISSUE OF DAILY NEWSPAPER "ARRIBA" CARRIED EXTENSIVE INTERVIEW OF ONE OF ITS REPORTERS WITH MOHAMED EL AFIFI, PRESS ATTACHE AT THE EGYPTIAN EMBASSY IN MADRID AND ONE OF LAST WEEK'S HOSTAGES. WHILE THE INTERVIEW LARGELY RECOUNTS THE 16 HOURS OF CAPTIVITY AT THE HANDS OF THE PALESTINIANS, COVERING BY NOW WELL-KNOWN GROUVD, SOME OF HIS COMMENTS PROVIDE FURTHER INSIGHTS INTO THE EPISODE.

2. PARTICULARLY INTERESTING, INTER ALIA, ARE PRESS ATTACHE'S ASSERTIONS THAT (A) HE IS CONVINCED, BASED ON THEIR BEHAVIOR AND CONVERSATIONS, THAT FOUR-MAN PALESTINIAN COMMANDO WAS ACTING ENTIRELY ON ITS OWN, DESPITE THEIR PROTESTATIONS THAT THEY WERE ACTING ON "ORDERS"; (B) THERE WERE ONLY THREE MOMENTS WHEN HE AND THE OTHER HOSTAGES FELT THEIR LIVES WERE IN REAL DANGER: AT THE TIME OF THE INITIAL ENTRY OF THE PALESTINIANS
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INTO THE EMBASSY; WHEN THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE SOUGHT ADMITTANCE TO

THE EMBASSY AND WAS ALLOWED TO OFFER HIMSELF ALSO AS A HOSTAGE;
AND AT THE END WHEN THE PALESTINIANS, THE HOSTAGES, AND FOUR
ARAB AMBASSADORS IN MADRID CAME DOWN TO THE STREET TO GO TO THE
AIRPORT; (C) ALTHOUGH THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE, GIVEN IN THIS
ACCOUNT AS ABU LEIS, DID NOT KNOW THE PALESTINIANS AND THE
TERRORISTS WERE APPARENTLY NOT CONNECTED TO THE PLO, THE
MESSAGE WHICH THE PLO REPRESENTATIVE BROUGHT FROM YASSER ARAFAT
(USING THE NAME ABU AMAR) CONDEMNING THE COMMANDO'S ACTION AS
PREJUDICIAL TO THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE, PROVED TO BE THE TURNING
POINT; (D) THE DISCUSSIONS WHICH THE EGYPTIAN AMBASSADOR AND
OTHER HOSTAGES HAD OVER THE HOURS WITH THE PALESTINIANS, POINTING
OUT THAT EGYPTIAN SIGNATURE OF THE SINAI ACCORD WAS NOT A BETRAYAL
OF THE PALESTINIAN CAUSE, HELPED TO GRADUALLY DIMINISH TENSIONS;
(E) TWO OF THE FOUR PALESTINIANS SPOKE SPANISH; AND (F) THREE OF
THE FOUR PALESTINIAN TERRORISTS USED THE NAMES ABU ISSA
(WHO WAS THE LEADER OF THE GROUP), ABU MOHAMED, AND ABU NUR.
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